the tomb shaped like a horseshoe or the Greek letter, omega. A great deal of popular lore has accumulated around this type of tomb. Okinawans believe that the shape of the tomb symbolizes the position of a woman giving birth to a child. This is related to another idea, "returning to the source" (moto ni kaeru in Japanese). 764 [811]

Four different but related meanings seem to be involved in the idea of "returning to the source": (1) that life here is but a momentary experience. One's real and permanent life is in the afterworld. At death one returns to his permanent home. (2) After death a person becomes a god (hotoke-san) in the Buddhist sense. He reaches this state 49 days after death, according to some explanations, though there is much confusion on this point. This godhood is a "return to the source." (3) At death one returns to a state of peace, and (4) one returns to a former state or to a former place. It is with this last meaning that the turtleback tomb is associated in popular lore with "returning to the source." 761 775

On death one returns to the womb of nature from which he came. (Similar lore has collected around the Buddhist coffin in which the corpse is put in a position like that of a child in the womb). Whether the popular explanation is the true one is very hard to say. It certainly should not be accepted without critically evaluating the questions which such an explanation raises. Early European and American observers were quick to point out the similarities between those tombs and those of China, though the fact that they were introduced from China does not rule out the symbolic meaning they might have. Many Okinawans regard these tombs as indigenous. But the Okinawan antiquarians, who so love to find symbols in everything, would be loathe to surrender this lore. It is generally agreed that the tombs were introduced from Fukien province in China. Captain Basil Hall was the first western traveller, I think, to notice the similarity between Okinawan and Fukien tombs. M'Leod also mentioned it. 775 764 811 [114] [171] [077]

The gable (hafu) type of tomb is very common. There are also small temporary tombs of masonry, more often built of rocks. The tombs of Hinatogawa are of this type. There are also very old tombs, hollowed out of the rock of a hillside. These were rare in the villages. Only one was seen in the dense vegetation and undergrowth at the bottom of a deep ravine in the center of Hatsuda. Large tombs hollowed out of hillsides are a commonplace, but the small ones apparently were the tombs of the very poor. Recently a new small tomb is being built by families unwilling to undergo the expense of the larger tombs. Tombs, though appearing to be haphazardly placed on mountains or on rocky hillsides, are on privately owned land. 764 [565]

The tombs may also be classified as to use, that is, whether they are intended for a single or the extended family. In Hanashiro, tombs are of the extended family type, located on land owned by the main family. They are the responsibility of the head of the main family. Branch families may contribute to the purchase price of the land, construction materials, and to maintenance. 764 602

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

4

O-Bon

The festival of O-Bon takes place on the 15th and 16th of the 7th lunar month (August 17-18, 1951), or from the 13th to the 16th, if preliminary preparations are included.[3] This very important holiday lacks the variety of themes which appear in the celebration of New Year. O-Bon is a festival to entice the spirits of the dead to their earthly home, and then, what is just as important, to induce them, after their visit, to return to the other world. O-Bon is an occasion for extended family reunions.

Generally on the 7th day of the month, about a week before O-Bon, the family or representatives of the family visit the tombs, take an offering of sake, and clean up around the tomb. At this time, the dead are asked to come back on O-Bon. This is the tanabata matsuri.[4]

On the evening of the 13th, two candles are placed within the compound entrance to guide the spirits back. This act of welcome is known as unke or omukaebi.

In Hanashiro, on the 15th there are prayers and offerings to the dead. Candles are then relit at the compound entrance and the spirits beseeched to return to the afterworld (ukui in Okinawan, okuribi in Japanese, meaning sending back). This may also be done on the 16th. Members gather at the home of the head of the house of the main family. The 16th is passed in rest and recreation. In Hinatogawa, observing the holiday may require a visit to Itoman. The Matsuda custom is like that of Hanashiro.

O-Bon is a colorful holiday. Lanterns are freely used. Whether the people believe that the spirits of the dead return is a question to which there is no easy answer. Many observe the formalities and the customs of O-Bon without believing that the spirits have actually returned. There is formal compliance, but in my opinion real belief is to be found mostly among women of middle age and older.

3 O-Bon has been variously translated as "The Lantern Festival," "Festival of the Dead," "All Souls Day," but I prefer here to retain the Japanese word, as these translations are only misleading approximations.

4 For an interesting discussion of the origin of tanabata in Japan, see Chamberlain, Things Japanese, 436-37. In Okinawa one occasionally hears this referred to as a "star festival."

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

women chant. The tempo becomes more and more frenzied, and at a certain moment a bell rings. Nobody knows who rings it, and no amount of questioning elicited any information other than that this was done by divine action.

Ancestral worship is equally important in the life of Taira people. Each house of an oldest son has a shelf with a shrine in the main living room. On this shelf the family keeps the ancestral tablets, each representing a deceased ancestor of a recent period. The tablets for whole family lines are kept on the shelves of the main houses. Through this system a family maintains continuity between the living and the dead. Although a deceased person is believed to become a buddha or a god who ascends to heaven, his presence is still felt by the living relatives. If they fail to make the required offerings on the first and fifteenth day of each lunar month, or otherwise neglect religious duties toward the ancestor, misfortune may come to the family. At the same time, the worship of common ancestors holds branches of the larger kin groups together.

No village adult died during our stay, but the funeral practices for adults described by Glacken (1955) and Pitts et al. (1955) for other villages in Okinawa are similar. Seven years is the age limit for a child burial, which is simple and does not require attendance of people other than immediate relatives and perhaps one or two neighbors.* During the study an 8-year-old boy died from an illness and was given a full funeral, which is similar to that of adults.

The funeral must take place at the first outgoing tide after the body has been prepared and dressed. Accompanied by family, residents of the ward, and mourners from other parts of the village whose number depends on the prominence of the dead, the body is carried on a simple, open litter to the tomb area just west of the central village (see map 2). Women feel free to show their emotions, while men remain outwardly calm. Until decomposition takes place, the body remains in a tomb used by the whole village for temporary entombment. Like other village ceremonies, funerals are less elaborate now than they once were, perhaps to the relief of all concerned, since death is highly anxiety provoking, and nobody feels comfortable during the prayers and the ritual farewell to the corpse at the tomb. The participants receive a cup of sake before leaving the tomb area to cleanse them of the pollution of death. Some people still prefer to return to the village by a different route so that the spirit of the dead person will be fooled and unable to follow.

* The reason for this is possibly that the younger child has not yet fulfilled his filial obligations.

765 After death, memorial services are held in the home of the deceased
769 every seventh day until the 49th day when a more elaborate ceremony
782 concludes this period, and a permanent tablet is installed on the house shrine. On this day, too, offerings to the deceased change from white rice to red-colored rice, indicating the end of the mourning period. From now on, observances in memory of the dead are held on the first, third, seventh, thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and thirty-third anniversary of death. These are small family affairs at which special food is prepared and offered at the shrine before it is consumed.

765 The body is left in the tomb for at least three years until a propitious day when the whole village decides to wash the bones of all those who have died within the preceding three to seven years. On Bone Washing Day little groups of family members gather around the coffin. They take out the bones, clean them, wrap them in a white cloth and place
[778] them in an urn. Women do all the cleaning of bones because it is be-
[152] lieved that they have more power to expel the evil. They weep freely,
[852] and even some men find it hard to restrain their emotions. Young children are kept away from the tomb area at this time. The urns are then placed inside the family tomb, which has been opened for this purpose. Remains other than bones are burned with the coffin.

769 Every lunar March ancestral services take place at the tombs, at-
782 tended by many members of the kin groups to whom each tomb belongs. Some come from the city or other villages for this occasion, including women who have married into another kin group. This celebration of the dead is more serious than other religious events. Offerings of sake and special delicacies are made and then eaten by the family group. One family, sitting in picnic style around the tomb after their prayers, even began to sing and dance—probably to the delight of the ancestors who in their life must have enjoyed many a good feast and dance. Tombs of other relatives may also be visited for short prayers and other offerings.

775 Spirits of the dead are harmful only if the deceased is not from the
784 village. For this reason new residents formerly could not bury their
766 dead near the village. Even now, recent settlers in the central village have no tombs and keep their dead in urns in a cave, and the residents
[764] of outlying houses or field houses have a separate tomb area altogether. If a stranger happens to die in the village, measures are taken to prevent his spirit from doing harm. The body of a fisherman from southern Okinawa was brought to shore after a storm. There it was left for several hours on the beach under a tent in the hot sun until relatives arrived in a hired car to take the body home. Even then peo-

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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ple did not carry it through the streets but along the shore to a spot nearby where the car could pull up.

Communication with ancestral or family spirits lies in the hands of individual households or the larger kin group. In general, as with the nature deities, women maintain the relationship. The oldest woman in the house prays and makes offerings in front of the divine shelf or by the tombs. Sometimes the high priestess, whose only regular role in the cult of ancestors centers around the mythical founder of the village to whom vague references are made, is asked to conduct a special prayer for a family at its ancestral shrine. Such invitations are usually the result of consultation with another religious practitioner to whom one turns in case of misfortune.*

Those who are considering a special undertaking, such as building a new house or moving to another one, or transporting ancestral tablets from one home shrine to another, seek the advice of a diviner, the *sanjinsō* or *yekisha*. This expert, always a man, consults books on the workings of the universe, special astrological calendars from which he can predict events by using a horoscope calculated on the birth date of the person seeking advice.

Although it would seem from the attendance at ceremonies that older people, mostly women, are the supporters of religion, even the most modern of the Tairans seem to share beliefs in the power of the supernatural forces and are loath to make an open break with traditions. One may verbalize that the old religion is just "superstition," but when it comes to dealing with adverse events, when somebody suggests that perhaps the *yuta* should be consulted, or a special offering is in order, or when the old special wine of the gods is prepared from rice for Boat Race Day, then many of the apparent apostates cooperate. To some extent this is done to appease the older people, but fear of neglecting duties, especially toward ancestors, is probably much stronger in general than people's behavior would suggest. Religious influence, then, which controlled so many facets of village life in former days, still acts as a strong force in uniting the members of families and descent groups as well as in binding together the community as a unit separate from other communities.

* See Chapter 9 for description of the *yuta* or shaman.

frequently and may be repeated as many as four times during the first year of a child's life. An older child occasionally undergoes this treatment for a case of violent impetigo. Even a horse may be bled in this way for loss of appetite or other symptoms of disease.

A woman whose face had been struck in an unusual display of temper underwent a blood letting soon after a swelling appeared. Her neighbor from across the street, a farmer like everyone else, sterilized her cheek with iodine and then cut it with a razor until the blood flowed freely. After a night's rest, the woman appeared outside her house without any signs of swelling and seemingly recovered.

As was pointed out previously, many diseases are believed to be caused by supernatural forces: the ancestor spirits, spirits of those who have just died, and natural deities and evil spirits who wander around at night. The ancestors expect proper respect and attention and in general are benevolent unless neglected. Spirits of those who have recently died are most dangerous if the deceased is from another village. For deceased villagers one is careful to purify oneself after the funeral. The doors of each house are shut at night to protect against the evil spirits of the night air. Disease is less frequently caused by natural deities who have been neglected or mistreated.

In case of sickness or other unfortunate events in the family, somebody may go to consult the *yuta*, a shaman who communicates with the supernatural. She discovers the cause of misfortune with the help of rice oracles and through powers of divination received through visions and hallucinations. There is no *yuta* living in Taira now, so that people have to travel to the other side of the island, an hour or more on foot, if they want to learn about the source of some evil. Taira people make many such trips to consult this shamanistic specialist. The most common cause of misfortune discovered by the *yuta* is neglect of ceremonies to the ancestral gods or, less frequently, the neglect of ceremonies to the natural deities. Although the *yuta* stands in no direct connection with the high priestess, she may suggest that her client ask the priestess for special prayers to rectify the negligence. In such cases, then, the competence of individuals in the family may not be adequate to deal with the ancestral world, and the priestess enters into family religion.

Some Taira parents still find an adoptive parent for a sickly child in the belief that his own ancestors have caused bad health, and that this can only be remedied by making a formal arrangement which transfers ancestral responsibility for the child to another family. The child remains with his own parents and only visits his foster parents during the New Year and the midsummer Buddhist *Bon* Festival, which honors ancestors, and perhaps at one or two other occasions during the year.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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On the whole it can be said that children seem to decide for themselves how far they can move around. Underlying the action of most is a dislike of venturing into unfamiliar grounds, and this largely restricts the territory commonly covered. Most children travel in groups of more than two, an aspect of Taira children's behavior to which reference will often be made.

The area of tombs is generally avoided by children, except by those who pass there to walk to the mouth of the Udenaha River or over the narrow, fragile bridge across it. While children do not fear the bodies of the dead, they express a fear of spirits. But during ceremonies for the dead, children accompany adults and participate in the social gatherings in front of tombs following the prayer. When the body of a fisherman was brought up on the shores of Taira after a typhoon, scores of children of kindergarten age roamed to the beach to take a peek beneath the canvas which covered the corpse. The policeman who officiated on the occasion impatiently waved away the kindergarteners, and when the schoolchildren returned in the afternoon, they also had to be warned to stay away.

In the central village itself, few places are closed to children. The village office building, of which only a section is reserved for office space, quite often attracts children. It is a convenient temporary shelter during rain squalls and a cool spot during hot weather. The village headman or his clerk may complain about too much noise and chase a group out, but this does not discourage them from returning soon afterward. The open prayer house, too, is a place for play, and no objections are voiced by adults, including the priestess and her assistants. These buildings are village gathering places, and children, as essential members of the community, have free access to them. The situation is different with regard to the township office and the post office, which children never enter except on special errands.

Children are familiar with dangerous spots, such as steep hills, and show amazing skill in maintaining balance, even when the ground is wet and the dirt is loose. On a picnic hike of a little under 4 miles, kindergarteners ranging from 3 to 6 years scampered across a frail, wide-slatted bridge, up and down over slippery clay paths and over rocky terrain with only a 30 minute stop to eat their lunches. In a group of about 15 children only two 3-year-olds slipped and cried to be carried down unusually steep inclines and over the rickety bridge. None seemed exhausted although many roamed off the paths to forage in the bushes for berries and laurellike flowers from which they sucked nectar.

Journeys outside the village are rare for most children. It is usually

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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857 intimate as they used to be. He has little in common with them, but
561 since he still takes care of a younger sibling or plays games to which younger children are attracted, there remain frequent contacts between the age groups. The transition between first grade and second grade is in no way as pronounced as the drastic status change from
[866] kindergarten to first grade. Children feel it mostly as a gradually increasing pressure toward assuming more responsibility. The transition which takes place at a ritual level * during the early latency period, however, is not reflected in their daily life.

CHORES AND RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING

857 Although adults say that the elementary school student is still very
868 much of a child who only toward the latter part of this stage can seriously be expected to contribute much to the tasks and duties in home and village; the children, in fact, do some work daily. Already in first grade, responsibility is approached with seriousness, girls exceeding boys in this respect. Children beg tasks, and obeying the school's directive to "help one's parents" seems to become the prime objective of first graders who have just proudly attained their new
857 status. They plead to accompany their older siblings who, with much
868 less zeal than the younger ones, gather giant African snails after
231 a heavy rainfall, hunt frogs, dragon flies, and grasshoppers, or wash
[866] potatoes for the pigs. Adults consider some of these chores play. Although frogs and grasshoppers are fed to the chickens, and minnows and seaweed are added to the pig swill, nevertheless, adults would not seriously label expeditions to collect these responsible. On the other hand, if there is no available feed, as occasionally happens, the child will be scolded and berated for "thinking only of play and not of the hungry chickens." Four- to 6-year-olds are discouraged from these foraging trips, for the danger of snake bites and accidents in the paddies and on the beach is very real. Accompanied by older siblings, however, they, too, may participate.

Some tasks, such as fetching water and feeding the pigs, cutting grass for the horse and goats, washing down the horse, and gathering faggots for the hearth, are still too difficult for the first grade child. But some of them are attempted, at least by assisting older children.

866 Once the child starts off to school, he is made aware that he is

[764] * In case of death, the child who has reached the age of 8 must be given a full
[775] fledged burial since in afterlife he becomes a buddha from now on. We had no indication that children were aware of this.

769 On the spring and autumn equinoxes imitation money is burned, on other occa-
527 sions special food is offered, and so forth.

•775 In spite of the great concern that Okinawans appear to take for the
969 welfare of the dead, they can tell one surprisingly little about what happens to them. According to one account, the dead person crosses seven bridges on his way to the other world; if he has led a wicked life he may have difficulty crossing them. In the next world he needs food and drink and money to pay taxes. Eventually, unless something holds him to this world, he becomes a "Buddha" (J. 'hotoke') or a "god" (J. 'kami-sama')---the terms seem synonymous---and ascends to Heaven. The most clearly defined and frequently heard notion seems to be simply that there is a vast and awful chasm between "this world" and "that world" and that a person who has once crossed the chasm ought to stay on the other side. A dead person may return, however, and appear to the living as a ghost if something disturbs him---a wrong unrighted, for example. Ghosts may attack former enemies or even harm anyone who happens to be around. But also a deceased person may cause disease or other misfortune to come to his own living relatives and descendants if he has not had sufficient help from them through their offerings. Thus many Okinawans, particularly the older people, are greatly concerned about the possibility of an ugwam-busuku, an "insufficiency (fusuku) of worship (ugwang)." They explain sickness, accidents, and lack of success in undertakings as the result of some ugwam-busuku. And so they consult with yuta and other dealers in the supernatural to determine where the insufficiency lies.

They also interpret success or good fortune, especially that which helps the family or larger kin group, as due to the help of the deceased ancestors. A woman gave the following incident as an example. During the bombing that preceded the landing in 1945 she had left the cave where her family was hiding to go to a neighbor's cave just when a great-uncle appeared there looking for a midwife to deliver a daughter's baby. The two related families had not known of each others' whereabouts and the informant's family was overjoyed to be able to move to the better cave of the great-uncle. This, the informant said, was not the result of the protection of the gods but of the ancestors.

The concern of the Okinawans for the dead is great, but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that it is motivated primarily by concern for the living.

3. Prospect of Change

152 Family life provides the individual with the security that he desires
593 but at the same time it gives him a basis for feelings of anxiety. The feelings of security he derives from the love he receives as a child, the honor he receives as a parent, and the knowledge that he will not be neglected in the next world. The solidarity of the family and the continuity of the family are essential to this security and so they are constantly stressed. But he also derives feelings of anxiety from family life. As a child he is carried around in an intimate fashion and then put down and made to run to keep

513 Ventilation at night may be poor; the sliding doors are usually tightly shut and locked. In larger towns and cities this practice may be explained as due to the prevalence of thieves, but in the country there must be another reason; it is probably the fear of yanakaji or of the kijimunaa. The first, yanakaji, literally "bad winds", are ghosts, who may [175] [176] cause illness. The kijimunaa is a sea-being or tree-being who causes a frightening but harmless sensation of smothering and weight on the chest. These creatures may enter through open doors or windows. According to one informant their entry might be prevented by setting up a butcher knife in the opening but I have not seen it done. (It could only be done for a window; in a door it would be dangerous to the human occupants.)

In spite of their sleeping with relatively little change in position while in bed, Okinawans seem to be able to fall asleep in a variety of positions and circumstances, in busses and on trucks, in the midst of family activities, with noise and bright lights apparently presenting no obstacles. This ability may be the result of the early experience of sleeping under all sorts of conditions while being carried on the mother's back. There are two restrictions to sleeping. All avoid sleeping with the head oriented west, because that is the way a corpse is oriented. The other is that girls and women must avoid sleeping with the legs separated. Iebra observed one grandmother give her little granddaughter a hard pinch on the thigh for this.

Okinawans recognize that sleep is essential to maintaining the body. After a restless night one may say that he "had insufficient sleep". [171] It has been asserted that the Japanese regard sleep as a luxury rather than as a necessity. This cannot be said of the Okinawans.

515 Cleanliness In care of the body, the Okinawans are among the cleanlier of
171 the world's peoples. They bathe frequently, keep their nails [302] clean by constant trimming, their teeth clean by prolonged morning brushing, and their hair neatly cut or dressed. But they are not as cleanly as the Japanese or at least as the urban Japanese. One reason why they bathe less frequently is that baths are simply less available. Many villages are without public baths. Most farmers must either pour cold water over themselves at their wells or a little hot water warmed in the kitchen. In villages [934] where there are few wells the water must be carried. Another factor may be modesty; nudity is not taken for granted as in Japan, so that one does not strip nude at the well in the daytime. A third factor may be the lack [703] of such highly-developed concepts of ceremonial purity and pollution as exist in Japan. There are no tabus on the activities of menstruating women on Okinawa as there are in Japan, for example.

291 Nudity Pre-school children often play nude. Mothers sometimes appear to
334 be displaying little boys nude to demonstrate their masculinity. Photographs of naked baby boys are popular. Boys may continue to swim nude until eight or so, but girls begin to put on some garment for swimming [153] sooner. Women nurse in public and sometimes work at home with the breasts [514] uncovered. Adults of both sexes may urinate in public, but in such a way that the body may not be seen. Adults do not appear publicly or privately [515] before one another nude. Public bath houses have separate sections for men

192 any kind of body dirt or excretion, as mii-kusu, "sleep" in the eyes, haa-
[578] kusu, "stains on the teeth". As in Japanese it is used also in cursing; in
[774] anger an Okinawan may say, "I'll make you eat feces." A similar phrase,
[775] kusu takkwee, "eat feces", is often spoken after someone, especially a baby, sneezes. It is explained that the custom arose when a person once overheard two ghosts plotting to steal a baby's soul (mabui), which may be easily detached by a sneeze; one of the ghosts revealed that if a living person spoke the phrase it would be sufficient to drive him away. The fact that the phrase is used in anger suggests that it is an undesirable one; that it is used in the case of sneezing probably demonstrates the greater fear of ghosts.

831 Sex Practices and attitudes related to marriage have been discussed under that heading in Chapter V. The sex drive seems to be regarded as
864 natural and not sinful. Adults playfully tweak the penises of little boys and may put little children of both sexes to sleep by prolonged patting of the buttocks. They do not tell their children about the nature of sex and expect them not to know, yet the children hear much thinly-disguised discussion of sexual relationships and, sleeping with their parents as they do, may be vaguely aware of their parents' relations. Parents expect their children to learn of sex "naturally" as they grow older. As Maloney reports[1], [839] there is little masturbation among small children, but two of Pitts' informants reported that adolescent boys sometimes hold masturbation contests to see who can ejaculate the fastest. This practice is said to stop with the beginning of heterosexual activity.

836 Formerly adolescents, except for girls of the gentry class, seem
883 to have had some sexual freedom. The practice of meeting in the fields at
178 night for parties, moo-ashibii, often led to sexual relations. According to informants in one community syphilis was brought in late in the last century through moo-ashibii with the youths of a neighboring village. Pre-marital sexual relations are probably frequent today, though the conditions under which young people meet are changing.

837 Married women are expected to have relations with only their hus-
548 bands, but married men are, in theory, limited only by their finances. There exists in the larger towns a relatively large class of women called juri, who function as both entertainers and prostitutes. (There is no distinction, like the Japanese distinction between 'geisha' and 'jorō'.) The [179] jurinuyaa, "juri houses", were formerly centers of social life for the men of the city. The present 'ryōtei' have much the same function. A group of men may spend an evening there eating and drinking and being entertained by dancing and singing. If one chooses to remain and "buy a woman" his wife's only objection to it can be that it costs more money.

838 Homosexuality is evidently rare, but not unknown. A Naha woman reported that a Japanese who lived in a room next to hers was in the habit of luring young boys into his room with good food and then seducing them, sometimes to their physical discomfort. She said that some of the neighbors

1 Maloney, 1945, p. 392.

Moreover, during the last days of the battle and for a period of nearly a year afterwards the Yamada people, like most other villagers in the vicinity, lived a concentration-camp sort of existence in the very crowded and unsanitary city of Ishikawa. Then when they returned to their village they had to rebuild their houses from materials given by the Americans and from salvage. This experience undoubtedly had a bad effect on morale and perhaps also on standards of cleanliness. Yet Yamada appears to be a cleaner village than many seen in Southern Okinawa. This may be because of its less dense concentration of houses and its fairly good water system.

Economic factors can be summed up in the single word "poverty". The most modern knowledge and the best intentions are not sufficient if one has to carry water from a distance, has no money for soap, and has little strength left after the daily grind of making a living.

3. The Supernatural and Disease

The Okinawans, like all peoples, have a large body of traditional knowledge about the ills of the body and what to do about them. As among many peoples with little contact with Western science, a great many illnesses are attributed to causes that we would call supernatural. Thus before one can understand the Okinawan view of diseases one must understand some of the Okinawan concepts of the supernatural.

Concepts of the Supernatural The living human being, according to Okinawan belief, contains two entities, the mabui (or mabuyaa, possibly related to Japanese 'mamori', "guardian") and the shii (pos. ident. with Japanese 'sei', "essence"). These correspond to the Western concept "soul". According to some informants the two are the same, but then further conversation reveals a difference in usage that must reflect a difference in concept. It appears that the mabui is a discrete entity capable of being dislodged from the body without death resulting immediately. The shii on the other hand appears to have more the nature of a force that can be augmented or diminished.

What happens after a person dies is not altogether clear (see also Chapter V). According to some he becomes a "Buddha" (Japanese 'hotoke'), according to others he becomes a "god" (Japanese 'kami-sama') and ascends to Heaven. This happens if all goes well, if the person dies in a normal manner and has left no important task undone, and if his family makes the proper offerings. However, if such is not the case, he may become a ghost and haunt this world. Several terms are used for dead persons in this latter form---yanamung ("bad thing"), yanakaji ("bad wind"), majimung (?), shininchu ("dead person"), shinigami ("dead god"), shinimabui ("dead mabui"). The last term, shinimabui, contrasts with ichimabui,("live mabui"), used for the displaced mabui of a living person. All of these terms seem to mean the same thing, the dead who are not cared for and who are therefore a potential danger.

The dead who are cared for are said to ascend to Heaven (in Japanese, 'Ten ni agaru'), but they may also be present in the tomb and at

● 775 the ancestral tablets, since they receive offerings and worship at both places. The spirits of the ancestors present in the tablets are called ugwansu (probably literally "masters of worship"). The existence of the dead in Heaven seems rather unclearly defined. In speaking of the dead, people much more frequently use the term "yonder world" (Japanese 'ano yo'), which seems to refer to a realm co-existent with this world, different from it in form but not necessarily remote in space. It is my impression that "yonder world" refers to an unseen spiritual world around the living rather than any distant Heaven or Land of the Dead. It may be that different entities go to different places, as in Chinese eschatology, where each individual has two souls, the "hun" which goes to Heaven as a god, and the "p'o" which stays on Earth as a demon. But the data at hand do not reveal [777] such a neat structure. Or perhaps the concept "Heaven" is merely a recent introduction from China and not yet wholly integrated with native concepts.

778 The distinction between spiritual beings who formerly had a human
780 existence and spiritual beings who are wholly non-human is also not always clear. In every village there are numerous ugwanju, places of worship. These seem to be associated with the founder of the village or the aji or local official---his tomb, the wells where he got water, the hilltop where he worshipped, etc. Non-human spirits probably are believed to inhabit these places, other than the tombs, but it is my impression that most of the worship is directed toward the deceased persons, and indeed that most important local spirits are in fact deceased persons who have become deified.

776 On the other hand, there are spirits associated with the house and yard that are clearly non-human. The most important of these is the Fii-nu-kang, "God of the Fire", or U-kama, "Oven". (These two terms may represent two historically separate concepts, but they are now used interchangeably.)
776 The Fire God is represented by a small vessel containing ashes that stands
778 above or behind the oven in nearly every house. It may even be found behind the little kerosene stoves used by city rooming-house dwellers. This vessel is made and attended by the mistress of the house. When a branch house is established she makes a vessel of earth or obtains one and partly fills it with ashes from the Fire God of the main house. The offerings, among some
776 Yamada families, consist of incense and three cups of cooked rice offered
782 on the first and fifteenth of every lunar month, before similar offerings are made to the ancestral tablets. On the 24th day of the 12th lunar month
776 the Fire God is said to ascend to Heaven to return again on New Year's. One old woman explained that the Fire God (Fii-nu-kang-ganashii) is "like a policeman" and Heaven (U-kami-ganashii) is "like the government"; when the Fire God goes up it reports whatever the family has done wrong during the year.

776 Offerings are also made on occasion to the gate, the well, the
782 corners of the yard, the pigsty-privy, and elsewhere. The "Pigsty-privy God" (Fuuru-nu-kami) was formerly of importance especially in treating cases of loss of mabui.

Although Okinawans occasionally refer to Heaven or the Gods of Heaven (J. 'Ten no kami-sama'; Okinawan U-kami-ganashii, etc.), the concept does not seem to be well defined. The clearest statement heard on the subject was the one just mentioned in connection with the Fire God. Since the dead, or some of them, rise to Heaven, the term "Gods of Heaven" may include them, but there are evidently other greater beings too. These may be identical with the figures of the native origin myth. But aside from a few enthusiasts, mainly local historians and shamans (yuta), few Okinawans seem informed about or concerned with native cosmology, or any other. This may in part be the result of a generation or so of Japanese education with educators attempting to take the Japanese mythology seriously and making Okinawan mythology jibe with it. But it is more likely that this lack of concern with Heaven is due rather to an old tendency common in East Asia to settle matters at the local level without bothering the higher authorities, in dealing with both political problems and spiritual problems.

In the Okinawan universe there are also a few earthly beings with supernatural power. The akamataa is a real species of non-poisonous snake. But it is believed to be able to change itself into a handsome young man, in which form it seduces unwitting young women. One young woman who was seduced is said to have given birth to a whole tubful of baby akamataa.

The kijimunaa is a wholly mythical being but seems to belong more in the natural world. According to some it lives in old trees, but according to others it is a sea-being who lives on fish and shellfish and who will become the helper of a fisherman who makes friends with it. Regardless of habitat, the kijimunaa is believed to approach a sleeping person and sit on his chest, nearly suffocating him and preventing him from crying out. Apparently the being is not dangerous but merely annoying.

Another being that is feared is the tamagai or 'hidama', "fireball". This was described in Yamada as a light that appears at certain times as an omen. However, in a village in Southern Okinawa it is regarded as the cause of fire. Since it is a female being the young men of this village drive it away by forming a procession and marching through the village shouting "Hoo hai!" ("Your vulva's showing.")

The Itoman people speak of the ja or 'ryu', the "dragon". This being lives in the sea or the clouds; its tail is the whirlwind; its feces, if one is fortunate enough to find them; are like coal tar and are a very valuable medicine. Other Okinawans seem to regard this as something only the Itoman people know about.

One more concept is perhaps worth mentioning; this is shiji. Certain places, the sacred hilltop of the village, etc., are said to be shiji-dakasang, "high in shiji", and therefore to be approached with respect. It is also said of persons, especially those believed to be destined to become religious practitioners. The term shiji evidently signifies a sort of supernatural power that adheres to places and people, perhaps like the Oceanian concept "mana". Haring has suggested that the Japanese concept

'kami' is like the Oceanian "mana", a supernatural power that enters natural objects or persons.[1] Whatever may be the case in Japan, the Okinawan kami refers to definite beings, discrete entities, and not to a force. However, the concepts shiji and perhaps shii may be mana-like.

Causes of Disease Okinawans frequently use these concepts of the supernatural in their interpretation of the causes and proper treatment of illnesses of the body. Illness may be caused, they believe, by loss of the shii or the mabui, by the harmful inclinations of other living persons and of dead persons, and by offences to ancestors and other spirits that are ordinarily helpful.

Gradual withdrawal of the shii may cause illness or death. A pregnant woman is warned not to attend a funeral or a bone-washing because the shii of the unborn child may be drawn into the tomb. A sudden jolt or a scare may cause the mabui to be dislodged and this will result in a feeling of weakness and, if the mabui is not replaced, perhaps ultimately death. Treatment of loss of mabui is often practiced by old women. One woman who had treated her grandchildren on numerous occasions said that she laid on a table offerings including salt, rice, water, and a dish containing seven stones; then she took a garment of the sick child, prayed at the entrance to the house, and called the child's name. The mabui of the child then entered the garment and when she put the garment on the child the mabui reentered the child. Formerly she would have prayed at the pigsty-privy, but it no longer exists. One of her sons gave the interpretation that the pigsty-privy god being the lowest god knew the whereabouts of the lost mabui and he informed the ancestral spirits who were able to bring it back to the garment.

The most serious cases of loss of mabui are caused by the actual theft of the mabui by dead persons, who are said to take the mabui to the tomb. As I have already mentioned, this may happen when a baby sneezes. Treatment of this type of soul-loss probably requires the services of a yuta, a sort of shaman. The yuta is said to be able to see the living person's mabui before the tomb, in the form of the person. If the form is facing this world and looks sad there is a chance of recovery, but if it is facing the tomb and looks happy, the patient will probably die. But in spite of the occasional serious nature of loss of mabui, I have observed young boys when startled jokingly cry out "mabuyaa, mabuyaa!" as if to call back their displaced mabui. And it is said that some persons jokingly pretend to scoop it up and pour it back into the body through the head. However, the joke may serve to relieve actual tensions that exist after a sudden shock.

Little information was obtained on the harm that can be done by a living person with ichijama. According to Yanagida[2] the ichijama is the soul of a woman who can send it to possess a person or object in order to

1 Haring, 1946, p. 221 and elsewhere.

2 Yanagida, 1951, p. 30.

cause misfortune; the ability to do this, he says, is hereditary from mother to daughter. My informants did not identify ichijama with the mabui or any other such entity, but merely explained it as a kind of 'noroi', "curse". Its effect is a sharp pain inside the body or the feeling that a fingernail has been thrust into the eye. If the person responsible is known, they said, the affliction may be cured by spitting in his direction and throwing pig dung in his direction, shouting, "I smear it on your face!" According to Yanagida, a yuta can cure an afflicted person by squeezing his thumb, which causes the thumb of the person responsible to be crushed.

Illness may also be caused by gods or local spirits as punishment for the breaking of tabus. For example, at Yamazato in Chinen-son it was said that on the 1st, 8th, 18th, and 28th of every month the "mountain god" (yama nu kami) makes a circuit of inspection of the mountain behind the village and therefore one cannot go to cut trees or grass on those days for fear of punishment.

But probably the most frequent interpretation of illness and misfortune is that it is caused by ugwambusuku, an insufficiency of worship (from ugwang, "worship" and fusuku, "insufficiency"). As has been explained, the dead can influence the lives of the living for good or bad. If the ancestors of a family are well cared for, that is, receive the proper offerings and worship, they may help that family to prosper and multiply, but on the other hand, if the ancestors are not cared for they will let the family know of their needs by some light illness, or, if their needs are still ignored, by some greater misfortune. They may not deliberately mean to harm their descendants; the misfortune may be automatic; this point is not clear. At any rate, the fear of ugwambusuku appears to be a very common anxiety and to play a central role in the whole structure of ancestor worship. Various religious practitioners and diviners, but particularly the yuta, are frequently called upon to try to determine where the insufficiency lies, what deceased person has not received his full share of worship and is therefore causing the current illness or other misfortune. To account for such illnesses and misfortunes the yuta and others may have revelations (shirashi) which revise the family's genealogy and even reveal the existence of hitherto unknown ancestors.

The insufficiency is not always of worship of the ancestors, although this is probably the most frequent type. Illness may also be caused by an insufficiency of worship of the Fire God. It is said that if an illegitimate child or the child of a secondary wife does not worship at least once at the Fire God of his shiji ("line") that is, the Fire God of his father's family, he may become ill. Thus it is not uncommon for the mother of an illegitimate child to bring it to the house of its father and ask to let it pray once to the Fire God there. This practice may also, of course, serve to demonstrate paternity.

Also probably related to the concept that the ancestors influence the living is the practice of establishing a fictitious adoptive relationship between a child and an unrelated family. If a child is weakly its mother may ask an unrelated adult to become the yashinee-uya, "adopted parent",